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ABSTRACT

Contemporary cultural and educational changes in the Arab States are reviewed with respect to the effort to liberate Arab countries from illiteracy. The stated objective is to establish common intellectual ground between Arab adult educators (policy-makers, planners, or executive officers) through understanding the social, political, economic, and educational situation. Three separate sections deal with cultural change and education, an Arab strategy for literacy and adult education, and education and the role of women in integrated development. A major theme is a strategy of integrated literacy throughout the Arab homeland: a strategy which combines an attack on "cultural illiteracy" (reflected in social and economic underdevelopment of developing countries) and illiteracy of the individual (ignorance in reading, writing, and numerical skills), which is seen as an inevitable consequence of cultural illiteracy. The author emphasizes the necessity of bringing formal and adult educational systems into an integrated plan at all levels--general, vocational, and university. He further proposes a "nationality of knowledge" through a common Arab fund in which states with the greatest financial resources should be the main contributors so that primary education for both sexes could be made universal in the Arab region. Specific suggestions are addressed to correcting the "cultural lag in understanding women's role." The analyses and proposals are illustrated with reference to the author's experience as professor, researcher, and Minister of Education in Sudan, 1969-1972. (JT)

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DEVELOPMENT AND ADULT EDUCATION IN THE ARAB STATES:

AN ANALYSIS OF SOME ISSUES

by

Mohi El-Dine Saber

Translated from Arabic

by

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Edited by J. R. Kidd

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Foreword

The functionality of education is today generally accepted everywhere. Education is an individual act in the sense that learning is a personal process of discovery or rediscovery. But both the effect of such learning and its many sided use, make education the most critical causal factor in national development and the key element in social change. A basic distinction between the current century and those preceding it is the universalisation of education, and the extent to which education, in the sense of people who are aware, informed and seeking and searching, is shaping our world at local, national and international levels. Education today is available to every one in any one of several forms. There is the traditional school which starts most people off on their quest for education, but there are also the multiple other non-formal and informal avenues available and used by people to accomplish their learning mission and attain the learning process. In fact in terms of disciplined reasoning, analysis and innovation, work on a farm can be more of a learning experience than a day at school; in terms of information transmittal, discussion and exchange, a session by housewives at the village well or listening and watching a radio broadcast or satellite transmitted TV message can have more of a spread effect than that of the classroom.

This wide ranging coverage of education and changing functional content makes it an important force in changing attitudes, creating new demands, raising hopes and expectations as well as providing the skills and expertise to push forward economic growth and changing the profile of poverty englobing so much of our world. Some aspects of this exciting story of education as the cutting edge of economic progress, social change and cultural development are set forth in the accompanying pages of this monograph. The monograph itself is the creative work of Dr. Mohi El-Dine Saber and represents the first cooperative enterprise of the

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Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organisation and the International Council for Adult Education. It is a small foretaste of the riches which the Arab World is contributing to the inexhaustible wealth of the wisdom which is the common heritage of all people everywhere. We are pleased to join with Arab friends in the publication of such important papers. The views expressed are, of course, those of the author.

Our thanks are due to Mr. Abdelwahid Yousif, Associate of the Council, for having made available to us this glimpse of education as it is functioning in the Arab world and as portrayed by one of its leading thinkers. It is hoped that this joint effort is the precursor of further cooperative educational endeavours of the Organisation and the Council.

Malcolm S. Adiseshiah
President
International Council for Adult Education

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Preface

These studies deal with aspects of some issues in adult education in the Arab homeland. Although they were written at different times and on different occasions, they are nevertheless integrated in terms of objectives and approach. They aim at establishing some common intellectual ground between adult educators in the Arab homeland — be they policy-makers, planners or executive officers — through a contemporary understanding of the social, the political, the economic and the educational situation in the Arab World, as part of a continuous search for an original scientific methodology that will respond to the needs of the Arab society and at the same time benefit from the activities that both governments and people in the Arab World are engaged in as part of their effort to liberate the Arab Nation from illiteracy — alphabetical as well as "cultural" illiteracy.

The main focus of the studies is to clarify some of the basic concepts related to our age and all the challenges we face; current concepts in the realm of literacy and adult education, and respecting the level and pattern of progress in both.

The studies include some views on the education of both the individual and the community, and on the dialectical relationship between the two. They are also concerned with the question of continuity of knowledge for which a Pan-Arab Fund must be set aside with contributions from the wealthier Arab states to meet the needs of all states until such a time when all the Arab children are absorbed in a compulsory system of education. It is my conviction that the Arab person is the only lasting capital for the Arab Nation.

Finally, these studies are no more than a dialogue about one of the basic phenomena in the Arab way of life. They will meet the objective if they provoke an awareness or inspire some action.

With the assistance of God, all objectives can be achieved.

Mohi El-Dine Saber

Editor's Introduction

This small book is an effective contribution to knowledge about adult education in developing countries. It relates two vital concepts, development and education, and highlights the significance of their relationship and their reciprocal effect on the structure of society.

The book reviews contemporary cultural as well as educational changes in all of the Arab States exhibiting both the variety and the underlying continuities of the region.

The writer, who is a distinguished teacher and "educational statesman", links the concept of adult education to continuing education, both for community development and the achievement of well-educated citizens, equal to the task of coping with developmental problems, utilizing their own rich traditions and the knowledge derived from the world-wide scientific and technological revolutions.

For education is not only confined to the dissemination of information and knowledge but it should also seek the cultivation of new values for future generations and their capacity for renewing and up-dating their knowledge and skills.

One of several important themes in this book is a strategy of integrated literacy throughout the Arab homeland: a strategy based on the concept of illiteracy as cultural and social as well as an educational phenomenon. This means that there are two types of illiteracy: cultural illiteracy of society and the ignorance of individuals. The illiteracy of society (cultural illiteracy) is reflected in social and economic underdevelopment and in the traditional character of many social and economic structures. Such illiteracy is common among all developing countries. The illiteracy of the individual manifests itself in the ignorance of reading, writing and numeracy skills: it is an almost inevitable consequence of the first and constitutes a problem of great magnitude.

The author proposes a strategy which combines action in both spheres at

the same time. The processes of renewing and developing society must proceed simultaneously alongside the process of teaching reading and writing, and both assume that there must be advance along many fronts — social, economic, technical, artistic, athletic — and the whole range of health and education.

This means, of course, the necessity of bringing formal and adult educational systems into a coherent, integrated plan, making adult educational activities an integral part of every educational institution at all levels of general, vocational and university education.

In regard to the Arab homeland, the author has an interesting proposal that he terms the "nationality of knowledge", meaning co-operation in solving educational problems throughout the Arab region. He urges that there should be a common Arab fund in which the states with the greatest financial resources should be the main contributors. In this way primary education for both sexes could be made universal in all Arab countries. Such an arrangement could be undertaken and supervised by the Arab Literacy and Adult Education Organization which can play an important role in co-ordinating this activity.

Universal primary education forms a fundamental element in the strategy to ensure that neglected children and youth will not add to the total of adult illiterates.

The last chapter deals with the role of Arab women in development. The author points out that there is a cultural lag in understanding women's role, which must be modified as the division of labour in modern societies has changed. The question that must be answered today in regard to the new concept of work in society and the responsibilities of men and women is "Who *can* do this?" instead of the traditional query, "Who *will* do this?" The author maintains that equal educational opportunity should be available to Arab women who have lagged behind historically for social reasons. Effective participation must be available to women for all kinds of production, organization and consumption since women form a basic part of society's working force in addition to their domestic social tasks.

This small book discusses many novel ideas. The proposals are realistic because they are based on the experience of a man who has been professor and researcher but who also has had the practical experience of directing a program of educational reform, as Minister of Education in the Sudan, 1969-1972. He writes from the perspective of his own studies and also from a living experiment in promoting social change through education.

J. R. Kidd

CHAPTER ONE

Cultural Change and Education

1. ON SOCIETY

Education, in its different forms throughout history, from the stage of upbringing of a child in the home to that of specialized institutions, is an organic and fundamental part of society. It is a social phenomenon that cannot be conceived and dealt with outside the structure of society, its aims, its functions and its means. The history of education is, to a large extent, the history and the future of society. This is an acceptable generalization. However, there are many details, some of which are quite fundamental, relating to both education and society. Some of these details are concerned with the nature and the degree of the relationship between education and society in terms of their influence on one another.

The cultural peculiarities which outline the profile of society define its relationship to the physical environment on the level of its dealings with that environment with full knowledge about its laws and with the capability to make such laws serve its needs. Cultural uniqueness also helps society in its endeavour to conceptualize a pattern of human relations pertaining to civil rights and duties for individuals and for the community. These peculiarities which in their totality represent knowledge, skills, values and ethics, have been exposed to fundamental changes in a number of societies.

The transition from a traditional culture, based on farming and grazing, to a modern culture based on industry with all the consequences of the scientific, the technological and the social revolutions that accompanied it, has had varied impact on different cultural components.

The most outstanding characteristics of modern civilization are, probably, its internationalism, its secularism, its infinite form and its commercialism. It is based on pragmatic and absolute scientific and mathematical rules which, given the necessary conditions, work efficiently at all times and in all places. Modern

civilization has, in addition to this, the peculiar characteristic of self-multiplication and self-proliferation. It also has fluidity. I am assuming here that most of the benefits of the technological revolution are of a commercial nature, thrown onto the market for profit-making.

This civilization is neither a geographical growth nor did it occur in a vacuum. It is a product of human toil to which all civilizations have contributed. The Arab civilization played one of the biggest and most significant roles. The modern European society has provided a conducive atmosphere for the new civilization, which has become the destiny of human existence — with all the concomitants of that existence: material as well as spiritual. That existence is totally encircled by modern civilization.

This situation has given rise to some new divisions and classifications of contemporary societies based on the degree of control which these societies may exercise over the means and the products of civilization, and the ability of societies to adapt to the new civilization. We, therefore come across terminologies such as: "advanced society" and "backward society" in addition to a number of other terminologies which relate to the same idea and its applications to politics, economics and technology.

The basic characteristic of contemporary civilization is science and its applications which have enabled man to uncover part of the secrets of nature and to exploit nature for the good of mankind. In the light of the foregoing discussion it can be said that the relationship between education — which is taken here to mean a specialized institution for the "production", the application and the dissemination of science — and contemporary civilization is both causal and dialectical at the same time.

2. ON EDUCATION

Education is entrusted with developing characteristics that constitute the essence of man, i.e. his intellectual and psychological abilities which produced civilization in its successive historical forms, from as early as the day man entered into a vital relationship with his natural environment.

In its modern format (that of public institutions) education is based — within the context of social specialization — on the generation of knowledge, its application, its preservation and its dissemination among, and by, members of the human family in a dialectical manner which should involve the entire system as well as those variables that contemporary civilization includes.

While education (in its different forms) as a social institution has been preoccupied with understanding realities and with responding to the needs stated by those realities, it has also been, through those very processes, active in changing the physical and social realities. It has influenced those realities and has, at the

same time, been influenced by them. Education is, by nature of its function, both memory and imagination. It deals with realities on two levels: the past and the present; it links generations through the transmission of cultural heritage and established scientific facts and in that way it remains close to the past. At the same time it prepares the younger generations for a future that is different from both the past and the present.

This function represents a major challenge to education in our age in which the rhythm of change (qualitative and quantitative) is so fast that mankind has had to resort to computers for recording, storing, classifying and disseminating information. It is a challenge that the concept of "life-long learning" and "learning to be" are contributing to the solution of its scientific aspects in respect to contemporary generations.

The challenge will remain in the fields of values and social interactions which result from new formations created by the scientific and the technological revolution. Such formations are difficult to predict.

Rejection as a phenomenon among world youth is one of the strong social indicators which will constantly confront the educationists with this question: to what extent can education succeed in striking a balance between its potential for the dissemination of information and knowledge on one hand, and its potential for predicting values and social interactions it is likely to generate, and how can the latter be propagated?

Some of the traditional issues related to education in a changing world have to do with quantity, quality and function.

Quantity is directly related to socio-political development, which makes education a state responsibility; at the same time, education is one of the fundamental rights of citizenship that every person must enjoy irrespective of age. On that score, modern societies accept compulsory universal education for all citizens (male and female) as a political necessity. Here we have a yardstick for measuring the degree of development and underdevelopment, poverty and wealth. The developing countries are incapable (mainly for financial reasons as well as for historical reasons) of implementing universal education for all children of school age. In addition, the victims of ignorance are a majority among girls and villagers and here illiteracy poses a serious danger that threatens a large proportion of the world population.

The problem of illiteracy is no longer a national or local problem that affects only a limited group of people. It is now affecting the entire world which has become an "electronic village". This kind of situation has its negative influence on socio-economic advancement, and on world peace, in a world that shares the same fate and the same destiny. The question is no longer whether the world should progress or retrogress, the question is: to be or not to be. Illiteracy in our

world is defined not by a lack of education, but by the lack of the ability to continue to learn.

The issue of quantity is, therefore, an issue that besets certain parts of the world. The issue of quality, on the other hand, is of international dimensions. Some people in the Arab Region relate quantity to quality. They cite the overcrowdedness in classrooms and the lack of facilities as important factors in this respect. This may be true. It may, in addition to other educational methods, be one of the reasons. But certainly not the only reason. The question of quality is in essence tied to the type of education, its function and effectiveness. And for that reason it is tied to the nature of modern knowledge, the abundance and the accumulation of information, and the fact that knowledge changes at a rapid pace that supersedes that of the school system. Quality is also related to the usage by school curriculum and the subjects taught. It is also related to the procedure of selection of topics and to the ability to adjust to the ever-increasing pace of change. In developing countries it is closely related to the social reality which is more or less different from the school reality. The school, with its curriculum, is a different world from the home and the community. It does not fully reflect the needs of the community. It is influenced by the technical patterns of the stereotyped curricula rather than by a response to community needs. In addition to the existence of this civilization gap between society and school, there is the lack of accurate national planning that provides a link between the curricula and the requirements of development. Such a situation makes education in general a superficial undertaking that causes a number of other problems.

The low level of education due to the above-mentioned reasons is one of the factors that lead to illiteracy. In the developing countries in particular this takes the form of adults with a very modest education relapsing into illiteracy, children dropping-out of school and other forms of wastage and failure.

One of the traditional problems is that concerning education and employment. In modern communities the educated groups are the political, social and technical leaders by virtue of the knowledge, the experience and the skills they have acquired. The proof of this is — or is supposed to be — the school certificates and the university degrees they obtain. Examinations are still unsatisfactory measures for which a fairer and more logical substitute is yet to be discovered by educators.

The question of education and employment is of interest to the developing countries generally because there has been a relative expansion in education without any relationship to a comprehensive national development plan capable of predicting the needs of the community. Because of the limited scope of development and also because of the superficiality of the kind of education which is mainly theoretical, many school and university graduates are unemployed. In addi-

tion to all that, government, in the developing countries, is the major employer and government jobs have a special attraction and temptation because of the prestige they carry and also because they are a source of power. However, there are few government jobs to go round. There is another major link between education and employment policy — jobs are related to the piece of paper a person holds, rather than the skill that piece of paper indicates, or his capacities to perform well.

It is necessary to mention here the need for a critical look into the volume of both modern and traditional jobs that so far have not utilized sufficiently modern knowledge as a result of relative backwardness and also because of non-use of advanced methods. This is a phenomenon which is also related to adjusting education to society. It also has a role in creating the central problem.

All this has led in some communities to the spread of open and disguised unemployment among teachers. A direct result is that some of those who comment on these issues have called for a halt in education so as to avoid unemployment.

It is obvious that there is no relationship between education and unemployment whatsoever; the opposite is absolutely true. In fact, education is probably one of the key sources of employment in any modern community. Some of the roots of the problem have already been discussed. These are obvious causes of unemployment: there is a shortage of jobs in nearly all societies. A good example is the sector of education, where there is a consumption of a high proportion of its products in the form of teachers and researchers.

Some of the high-income countries which have lately embarked on development projects face a shortage of trained teachers. These countries provide an outlet for those countries which face unemployment problems in this respect.

It is hazardous to handle the unemployment problem by looking superficially at some of the negative aspects with which education has no responsibility. Such aspects may have a direct relationship to other causes, to administrative, economic or social structures. It is therefore not appropriate to jump to the conclusion that education must be curtailed. Education has been, throughout history, and it shall continue to be a source of regenerating employment.

3. THE SITUATION IN THE ARAB STATES

The economic and social situation in the Arab States is the realistic framework within which the educational processes are conducted. To define the role of education in the Arab States one has to present a picture of the situation and understand its characteristics.

Most Arab countries display the basic characteristics of the so-called "developing" nations with respect to the socio-economic structure and are subject to the processes of change imposed on human society by more established civilizations. It is a situation which witnesses countries and peoples passing through the

painful stages of transition with all the burdens of achievement and failure, conflict and adjustment in the material, the moral as well as the psychological spheres.

Despite all that, the Arab States have some unique characteristics. There is unity of culture, language and history and there is the geographical unity, which is a positive factor in educational matters. It is a situation that is also characterized (within the field of education) by a great history and well-established traditions in research and scientific discovery in the realms of experimental and clinical sciences which places the Arab heritage in a unique position as regards the history of scientific advancement in the world. It is also characterized, in a good part of the region, by a phenomenon facing developing countries which are poor. We must understand the significance of the resources generated by the oil resources. This oil-derived power has in itself a unique characteristic. It is not a practical and comprehensive developmental achievement that results from and gives evidence about the labour and skill of the Arab individual. It reflects a state of wealth more than a state of development. Moreover, there are some Arab States that can be listed among the least developed countries of the world in terms of their present financial resources.

In addition to the challenges of modern civilization, the Arab States consider their struggle against Zionism a unique challenge of destiny. This struggle is twofold: just like any other struggle. Although it consumes a great deal of resources that could have otherwise been used for development, it at the same time constitutes an essential motive in promoting the ability of the Arab individual to stand up to their responsibilities.

The kinds of education found in the Arab region are varied in terms of quantity, quality and kind and it is a variation that can be historically justified. However, the educational systems in the region do exhibit some similarities through general awareness of integrated thought and cultural unity through the activities of local and regional institutions, through the different forms of cooperation and joint technical work. However, the ability of these systems to produce the necessary cultural change (or, in other words, development) or even their ability to adapt to the requirements of change, is still one of the fundamental questions.

One of the characteristics of contemporary civilization is its commercial nature, that is to say, it can be purchased; that is part of its nature. This means that he who has the financial means can obtain all the superficial elements of it, can purchase its body but not its soul, can consume it but cannot produce it. Possessing the superficial elements of development can never be a viable alternative to creating and experiencing it.

Development must be created; it must be created and experienced, and that is the real difference between a developed and a backward society.

For real development and for a suitable change of the traditional structure of society to take place, there is need for trained manpower, for education (advanced education), so that wealth can be counterbalanced by experience and human skills. Development is not an increase in wealth only but it is essential in the development of man, it is the growth and utilization of natural resources through the development of man.

4. EDUCATION AND CHANGE

The relative changes which take place in the fabric of contemporary Arab life in their search for a contemporary unified civilization is not unique to the Arab states. It gives rise to numerous and complicated problems which cannot be discussed here. Perhaps the most significant problem is the conflict between historical cultural values and the new values which a modern civilization generates — together with changed patterns of relationship and patterns of behaviour which engulf all aspects of social life. Civilization does not reside in the machines or material progress, it is also the value systems and the way of life which such systems create to be able to adjust to civilization. One has no alternative but to accept the moral outcome involved; otherwise a permanent dichotomy and a continuous alienation will occur and that will lead to a total loss of the past as well as a lack of control over the present.

Lack of a complete understanding of the comprehensiveness of civilization and the integratedness of development can only lead to a state of cultural illusion which results in the belief that one can cling to the traditional value systems, and at the same time enjoy the benefits of modern civilization. Or that it is possible to pick and choose from among the items of cultural technology that which suits the traditional value systems as well as the current value systems. Such an approach has resulted in incompleteness and ineffectiveness in development, including educational institutions. It has also perpetuated one of the most serious problems relating to the process of development and its effect on the national identity, namely the belief that development means economic development in the narrow sense. As a result of this, all investment is directed to the building of factories. Education becomes one of the services, not an economic investment. In addition to that, education is conceived as a consumer commodity in that its products constitute a problem of unemployment which burdens the state, and not a productive force.

One of the questions that are raised by the nature of change in the course of development, a factor of international effect, is the question of a longitudinal or historical race between the developed and the developing nations. To get out of the cycle of underdevelopment, and to remain in the race for a rational civilization, the developing nations have to adopt contemporary activities in the developed

nations, and they have to enter all fields of labour.

This conception assumes some difficulties in the conflict between historical values and modern values dictated by the new moulds of civilization. This is one of the problems to which reference was made earlier. There is another practical question facing the developing nations for which a solution must be found. The gap in material civilization will always exist and will increase continuously because the developed nations, who have a wide economic lead and who have the economic means to remain ahead have increased every day, a record of growth and reproduction made possible by their advantages. Meanwhile the developing nations stumble in every step they attempt to make forward because these steps are not natural or familiar to them. Even if a step forward is taken, it is usually incomplete and inadequate for either technical or material reasons. On top of that, the result is an increase in social problems and difficulties because growth has occurred in an unsuitable social environment.

The situation among nations of the front-runners and those straining to catch up will remain. Time can only add to its complexity instead of solving it.

The possibility of permanent cultural dependency is at the heart of the problem of change in the developing countries, which include the Arab Region. This dependency covers all social institutions, chief among which is the educational system.

From the viewpoint of cultural dependency and the concept of some nations running ahead and some lagging behind, one can list several phenomena in the realm of education. The reality of the situation is that the developed nations themselves are faced with basic educational problems because of the basic role education has played in bringing about contemporary civilization. These are related to the question of adjustment to the rigid reality in which education developed and also to a large extent is responsible. It is a natural phenomenon to which every social system (which is growing) is exposed.

In the developing countries, on the other hand, the problems of education are peculiar because they are not related to the volume or flow of information, or control over its distribution through the use of the media of communication and organization, the most advanced output of technology. The educational system has not become a natural organic part of the society and the modern systems of education are alienating. What the school produces by way of information and skill is not necessarily relevant to society. It is, therefore, important to remake the content of education in harmony with society in order to create an indigenous educative or learning society.

In addition to the gap between the structure of traditional societies and the educational systems, there is another gap which is partly an outcome of the same phenomenon. This is the gap between education and individuals. Many individuals

are still outside the orbit of education. The question of illiteracy, for example, is not encountered in the developed societies in the profound form which is encountered in developing societies. It is encountered within the wider context of Adult Education to help the individual adjust to the fast tempo of life and its new requirements.

There are many reasons for the alienation of individuals from education and also for their inability to have access to it. The traditional reason given is the lack of funds. But there are other reasons which are related either to values or the factor of timing.

There are other problems of a similar nature. Some of them are connected with the entire educational process — concept, planning, administration, curricula, methods and techniques as well as technology. One of the problems education faces in its attempt to renew itself is how to achieve a leading role in society. There is an imbalance between the changing of society and its modernization because some factors have moved forward while others trail. Some are accepted as dominant while others are regarded as subordinate. These are matters that are difficult to control; they have created problems for education. For example, the political and legal decision to demand universality of compulsory education, preceded the technical and financial ability to achieve such a goal. The result was an ineffective application of that idea. Another example is an acceptance verbally of an individual's right to work which led to the prizing of school certificates and paper qualifications in a superficial manner without weighing these certificates against the values of experience, skill and sometimes a record of specialization. The result has been a series of bottlenecks caused by unemployment, both open and disguised. In addition to that we have a situation where superficiality in education prevails.

Another problem has been a favouring of economic development which has some direct material returns and a disregard for social development, the basis for real human progress. This distorted view has had an adverse influence on the developing of education.

There is also the tendency to show more concern with the form of institutions than with their content. This is a common practice when cultural models are copied from abroad. Organizational form is transmitted more quickly than the development of appropriate content, consequently there is a tendency to pay special attention in the educational system to the copying of buildings, playgrounds, parks, administrative and technical procedures instead of paying attention to the development of the content and adapting it to the reality of the situation so that, at the same time, education can help change and rebuild society.

Moreover, the role of education in society in building up social responsibility is forestalled by the dominance of political administrative and economic personnel.

Their relatively low social position has affected those in charge of education and those who are involved in it and kept them from the spheres of influence and decision-making. This has had and will continue to have influence on the development of education and its renewal

5. CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between education and the level of civilization in a given society is both causal and dialectical; each of the two institutions influences the other. But an advanced system of education in a developing society — if it exists — complicates matters rather than helps progress; the same thing applies to a primitive system of education in an advanced country, if it exists . . .

One of the problems of education in developing countries, and the Arab Region is included here, is the gulf that stands between the structure of the local traditional society and the modern system of education which is part of an international system aimed at efficiency, at renewal of itself and retaining attributes appropriate to an international pattern. We need to take into consideration the fact that those who administer a system based on international models have many more international contacts and this has modified their thinking.

There must be a realistic assessment of the link between education and the social fabric which influences it and becomes influenced by it. Education cannot progress by itself, and if an educational system exists alone and disconnected from a society, in no way can deep and thorough knowledge of the ways and means of educational progress help to bring it about. Progress can only take place if the various institutions are equally advanced and well-rooted. When that happens, all institutions can support one another in achieving progress.

An analysis of the current situation has given rise to a number of questions relating to education such as quantity, quality, employment and illiteracy.

While internationalism in education is a fact and relativity exists responding to a combination of social factors, there must be room for innovations within the organization of the facilities and conceptions in any society or region so that creative attempts may be made to solve some of the questions that arise.

The role of modern education in the development of social life and its renewal and modernization is an accomplished historical fact, especially within the context of modern civilization which is based on science, research and technology. For this role to be positive there must be a qualitative as well as a quantitative effectiveness in the sense that education should be qualitatively comprehensive and functional to bring about a society that is able to give and take, and to produce and consume. Such an achievement lays the foundation for a "learning society" and "lifelong education". One of the issues that has to be carefully considered in this context is the subtle difference between originality and imitation, a prominent

feature of which is the question of "purchasing progress" and "creating progress". Some of the developing nations can purchase the scientific equipment but they can neither make that equipment nor can they manage it or use it with the necessary efficiency.

Education is therefore called upon to lay the scientific foundation in society in a free way capable of innovation. Education is also called upon to stand up to difficult questions and choices. Should parallel systems for progress be created to renew education and society, one stemming from the reality of the situation; one persisting on the historical longitudinal path which is a repetition of human experience? The enriching of human experience and its diversification calls for such a conceptualization whatever difficulties may arise.

One of the outcomes to which the foregoing concepts seem to be pointing is that the renewal of education in the Arab Region is linked to the renewal of the social fabric. This leads to thinking about the factors in productive social advance which in turn leads to the fact that a substantial number of the people necessary for social and cultural change and the creation of balanced development, are actually outside the orbit of education in one way or another . . . For example, the illiterates in the Arab States are, according to the optimistic statistical data, more than 50 percent. And the educated ones are either suffering from backwardness because of the superficiality of the education they have received and all the problems that go with it or they are suffering from an inability to adjust to the rapid changes that occur in the area of specialization.

The whole situation is directly related to the economic structure which is still a traditional one, as a whole depending on the production of raw materials; agriculture is probably one of the distinct areas in this connection.

Accordingly, the only way to face this problem would be to invent a formula for the education of the Arab masses based on the need for a change of attitudes and conceptions and for creating and modernizing experience in every sphere, with special attention to the education of women. Teaching a person to read and write is not an end in itself. It must be a program integrated with life, which deals with teaching about modern living with all its duties and responsibilities and in all the walks of life in a way that ultimately will lead to educating the entire society and bridging the gap between contemporary generations.

One of the obstacles that stand in the way of qualitative universality of education as well as its quantitative efficiency is that gap which exists between the socio-political objective and the stark financial reality for some nations and the problem of a time-span for others.

In meeting the huge financial cost of education, financial as well as political and economic priorities of some nations stand in the way of the necessary expansion. The participation of the people can play a decisive role in this situation. The

experience of Sudan in financing the renewal of its educational system through a popular community participation program between 1969 and 1972 is a rich and positive one. The problem was left to local efforts of people all over the country who succeeded in putting up thousands of school buildings and also made some cash contributions toward the heavy cost incurred by a national decision to restructure the educational ladder and increase the elementary stage from 4 to 6 years. The cash contribution of citizens resulted in tens of millions of pounds. But the conception in this particular project did not limit the participation of the community and the citizens to financing contributions. The community role went beyond that and opened the door for participation in the conceptualization of the curricula and in the actual administration of the schools — thus creating in the community a sense of responsibility for and a sense of allegiance to those institutions.

Innovation can cover a wider area in this respect. The traditional function of the school can be re-examined in such a way that the school becomes a community school and the teacher becomes a community teacher. Many community activities revolve around the school. This can be aided if teachers (male and female) receive comprehensive training which will enable them to tackle the processes of social and economic development at different levels, especially at rural levels. Consequently the role of the school in the integration of society becomes effective through the renewal of society. When this is accomplished generally, it will put an end to the state of alienation of schools from society.

Related to this philosophy of community participation is the attempt to cut down the cost of building schools, an item that consumes a substantial part of the budget of the ministries of education. This is achieved by creating new designs, by getting away from copying international architectural standard designs with their technical specifications in construction. All school buildings should be designed from the point of view of both form and material, to suit the local environment so that the school is no longer an alien construction within the local community, seeming to peer down upon the community by mere physical stature and splendor. All of these adaptations or creations should be made in a way that preserves for the school its function and guarantees the durability of the building in an economic sense.

One of the findings based on the above detailed concepts is the need for a reassessment of the relationship between employment and school credentials in an attempt to find an answer to the dilemma which exists between the educational institutions and government jobs. It is a dilemma that portrays the entire developing society as two interdependent buildings: these are the school building and the chancellery building. This is understandable as both the school and the government system of administration are both relatively new institutions in the

developing societies. Both must work together for the renewal of the fabric of society; they have to try to expand and modernize the spheres of development, and both must co-operate to re-examine the form and function of the school in order to be able to achieve a more flexible system with respect to the school's rules and regulations, its curriculum, and its administration until it becomes an integral organ of the community; the source both of society's renewal and of varied employment. The renewal of society, must be an effort which is related to the environment for education. At the same time educational transformation must take place within the framework of international cooperation because the problem is basically one of substituting the one reality with another and that calls for an adjustment to the dominating civilization within the context of the scientific and social advancement. Renewal, therefore, has a nature which is above "national". It is useful to be exposed to experiences elsewhere in the field of renewal, and to other techniques for meeting its requirements and the problems thus generated. It is always necessary, however, to ensure that cooperation does not become passive reception, or copying. All experiences, expertise, ideas and aid must be tested against the realities of the Arab World in a process of enlightened cultural adaptation (as well as creation), that will lead to a healthy responsible process appropriate to the needs and requirements of development. Moreover, this cooperation must always be a two-way street so that interaction between the national and the international efforts and experiences can take place for the enrichment of experience on both sides.

CHAPTER TWO

An Arab Strategy for Literacy and Adult Education

1. INTRODUCTION

The Arab society constitutes one of the developing societies, sharing with them the problems created by development and growth. Illiteracy is only one of those difficult problems which are social, political and economic. The Arab Nation is quite aware of the dangers of illiteracy, it is determined to fight it and has actually taken steps in this direction in many areas of activities, but the results have not yet measured up to the level of expectation. On the contrary, illiteracy has, irrespective of all those efforts, continued to spread.

This chapter deals with eradication of illiteracy, *Mahw Al-Ummiyah*, which is an inaccurate Arabic expression for describing the phenomenon. It also deals with adult education which covers all educational experiences for youth and adults and is thus a wider and varied concept. It should be mentioned here that these two concepts are inter-related in terms of their objectives, functions, and methods, even if they differ in degree and diversity.

Generally speaking, both literacy education and adult education must be related to the question of illiteracy in the developing nations. Eradication of illiteracy, for example, deals with basic literacy in communication skills (alphabetization) while adult education deals also with cultural and social literacy — if such expressions are valid. Both are requirements of contemporary life. They aim at either preparing the individual or helping him to readjust to the social and political ideas of the times and to the rhythm of rapidly changing life in order that he can participate fully by producing, sharing the results of production and developing effective human relations.

The search for a strategy for this kind of education becomes an urgent human necessity, especially for the Arab World which is faced with political and social circumstances which are not of its own making, but imposed on it by the world

situation. The Arab Nation must face up to those circumstances and must come out triumphant so that it can assume the cultural role for which it is equipped because of its glorious traditions in the building of human civilization and also because of its material wealth and the quality of its peoples.

It is better, in this context, to avoid making this enquiry (which sets out in search of an *Arab* way to tackle this issue) merely a survey of the existing situation or a repetition of other surveys. It should be seen as an attempt to move forward from where other surveys stopped. Therefore, we may often disregard (except when it is not possible to do so) many details and generalizations which are already available.

2. THE NATURE OF ILLITERACY

Basic illiteracy is the lack of skill to read and write in any of the written languages. As a social phenomenon, illiteracy is as old as formal writing, as old as man. However, before the invention of scripts, and for most people for generations after that invention, illiteracy was not a serious problem in social life. History has known illiterate leaders and reformers who brought about profound changes in this world. However, illiteracy does become a problem within the context of contemporary life as a result of social, political, scientific and technological evolutions and revolutions which have deeply influenced every aspect of life.

Political thought has witnessed some radical change in the concept of power, its source and practice, its functions and what kind of responsibilities should accompany it. This change has a direct bearing on the individuals; on their rights and their duties in relation to Authority. Individuals are now citizens who have the power to establish the ruling authority and give it legal sanction, they practice their full rights by participating in conducting and carrying out legal authority which has wider responsibilities and varied obligations. These include all activities in society, as well as all services and production. In this context, education (which is a significant way to create social beings) has become an obligation on both the individual and the State. The latter must provide the resources and organisation, make it accessible and obligatory, while the former must use it and stand up to its challenge. The right and duty in this case cannot be shunned or refused by either the State or the individual at any point in time, present or future. Also, the social right and the duty to work are linked to education. For a citizen to fit into the cycle of public life, and for his social mobility to increase, that citizen must be prepared and equipped through education that takes place over his lifetime.

What took place in the social and political arena in terms of political thought has a parallel which is deeper and more significant in the arena of science and technology. Modern civilization is based on the results of natural science, mathe-

matics and their practical applications and this has led to a revolution in the relationship between man and natural resources, with the result that man has more power and control over these resources which he now uses for his benefit and sometimes for his destruction.

The unique nature of modern civilization has had many influences on social organization and social control and in defining positions and roles on the scale of values, attitudes and social relations. As a result, changed attitudes as well as new techniques of production, skills and experience have emerged. Job specialization has increased and some jobs have become more complicated. One result is a change in the nature of work in society, its scope and its technical requirements. Work has become, within the context of civilization, linked to education because static traditional work has no significant value in a rapidly changing society, in the world of greatly structured patterns of production and in the international unlimited consumer market.

It is therefore clear that contemporary civilization cannot accept illiteracy. In fact, illiteracy presents a contradiction, particularly socially and technically. This leads to the conclusion that illiteracy should be tackled within a comprehensive framework of civilization. Another implication is that the spread of illiteracy in any society would necessarily mean that that society can be defined and regarded in its total structure as a backward society in relation to the dominant pattern of civilization. In other words, the problem is not only educational but also a cultural one. Illiteracy constitutes a statement about society as much as it is a statement about the individual. The presence of an illiterate person in a certain society and the ability of that person to function fully in that society, enjoying a full life, indicates that the structure of the society in question is a traditional one, with traditional labour relations and traditional social relations. It is therefore necessary to take into consideration the structure of society whenever we try to work out a conceptualization of illiteracy. Literacy must be related to some comprehensive activity in which the individual is involved within the context of the renewal of society. This view will be presented in more detail later.

3. SOURCES OF ILLITERACY

It can be generally stated that illiteracy is associated with social backwardness and that deprivation is actually one of its phenomena. The historical dimension is a decisive factor in this respect. The developing nations have started their journey on the road to civilization rather late due to the colonial repression of their creative will, which also drained their material and human wealth, used that wealth instead for advancing social and economic structures for the benefit of the colonizing society.

On the other hand, we must state firmly that judgment on the contemporary

and dominating civilization is relative. Reference to it does not imply that all contemporary societies must conform because of its absolute domination. Neither should the reference mean a debasing of the historical and cultural traditional values.

From the socio-political point of view, cultural backwardness relating to basic illiteracy takes the form of inability to practice positively civic rights and responsibilities. This takes a variety of forms.

Now that education is the responsibility of the State, some states may not be able to provide education to all those who need it at the time they need it. Those who do not benefit from it become the prey of illiteracy. Or the State may offer education at the right time but in an inadequate way, in which case some of the beneficiaries will also lapse into illiteracy. On the other hand, the State may offer education at the right time in an adequate way but some of those who need it decide to stay out either because of a temporary economic need or for some other social reason. The state may offer adequate education when it is needed; and those who need it may show great enthusiasm for it while many of the older citizens have missed the opportunity and remained captives of illiteracy.

All these conditions exist in the Arab Society. There are communities that are financially incapable of supporting universal compulsory education for the young. There is also the problem of drop-outs and wastage because of the lack of quality of the educational systems. There are those in village and nomadic communities who miss education, especially girls. Even though these problems are gradually diminishing, they have all contributed to the phenomenon of illiteracy and added to its volume.

On the other hand, there are some countries in the Arab World that are financially capable and whose citizens are making use of the available education provision. But illiteracy among those who have not benefited from a new situation is still high. Illiteracy will continue to be a problem in those countries for a long time to come.

As far as technological and scientific advancement is concerned, illiteracy forms a barrier which negates any positive interaction between science and technology and society on one hand and between society and the social influence that may result from science and technology on the other; especially in relation to the new job opportunities which require some special training that can only be obtained through education. Such vocational competence can no longer be achieved through traditional institutions, except in a marginal way, which provide no growth, expansion, or participation in solving the social problems resulting from this specific change in life.

The illiterate in the modern economic structure is a semi-idle (if not completely idle) force. Worse still, he consumes what others produce, and in that way

he reduces the productivity rate of the work force. The negative influence of the illiterate in this case is not only in his absence from the socio-economic producers, but also in his drain on the contribution of others.

With regard to advanced science and technology, concerns are more with adult education in its widest sense than with literacy. It is here that the question of cultural illiteracy is raised because of a whole range of factors: the progressively faster rhythm of change in the means of production, methods of utilization; shifts in values, attitudes, and human relations, in the growth of knowledge and a cultural explosion; and the surfacing of other problems such as pollution, the dangers of war, the population explosion, and food problems. All these render the renewal of knowledge, experience and skill, including providing for their continuity and updating, absolutely vital and unavoidable — either for preparation or for re-adjusting to a continuously new situation.

In conclusion: illiteracy, both in communication skills and cultural competence stems from the pattern of present day civilization which has spread over all humanity, of which developing societies are a part. It can also be said that political and social progress and the need for human beings to share in it, is the cause of and the reason why lack of reading and writing skills has become a problem, since it constitutes a barrier between the individual and his potential to exercise his social and political rights.

On the other hand, it is not possible for a culturally illiterate person to coexist with modern science and technology.

Despite this distinction it must be said that illiteracy in communication competence is a complex matter which of necessity includes cultural illiteracy. Planning to achieve full literacy in a society should therefore be seen as a complex cultural problem and not as a simple educational problem. The illiteracy rate in a society is an indicator of the degree of social, political, scientific and technological backwardness, rather than an indicator of how many people cannot read or write.

The conclusion of all this is a paradox: that illiteracy (both kinds) is a result of backwardness and also of progressiveness in the same society at the same time.

4. VOLUME AND SHAPE OF ILLITERACY IN THE ARAB STATES

Accurate and scientific statistics in the realm of literacy and adult education are yet to be established for most states. The kind of statistics that are used are either taken from projections based on the enrollment of children in schools or deduced from the general population census. Even the latter, with the exception of a few Arab States, does not give a complete and detailed picture. The census is conducted at intervals which vary from 5 to 15 years. Some states are content to use administrative statistics which fail to reflect the reality of the situation. All this opens the door for some suspicion about the accuracy of the kind of statistics that

are employed in the realm of literacy and adult education. However, inaccurate as they may be, these statistics are indicators and so far there has been no obvious substitute.

One of the available statistical studies covers the period 1966-1971. It shows — despite the reservations one might have — and covering those who are 16 years of age and over — that illiteracy in the 14 Arab States which were studied, ranges from 24 percent to 81 percent, with a median of 62 percent. The percentage of illiterate males ranged from 21 percent to 70 percent, with a median of 50 percent. The percentage among females ranges from 27 percent to 91 percent, with a median of 75 percent and with a difference of 25 percent in favour of males.

The percentage of illiteracy among urban dwellers ranges from 27 percent to 88 percent, and among rural dwellers it ranges from 45 percent to 92 percent, with a median of 76 percent, with a difference of 22 percent between the two means in favour of the urban dwellers.

In estimates for primary education, which usually extends until the age of 12 and sometimes to the age of 15, statistics indicate that out of every 100 children of school age, 28 stay out of school. The percentage for boys is 20 out of every 100, and for girls it is 40 out of every hundred. This situation is made worse by the percentages of drop-outs and failures.

With regard to literacy programs outside the formal system, a study carried out in 6 Arab Countries with adequate information on illiterates, the number of those registered in literacy classes and those who successfully completed the program, indicates that the percentage of enrollment to the total illiterate population in six countries (Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, Egypt, Kuwait and Abu-Dhabi) ranged between 5 percent and 8.7 percent with a median of 0.78 percent while the number of those who successfully completed the programme to the total number of illiterates represented ranged between 0.08 percent to 5 percent with a median of 0.5 percent.

This means that literacy classes in those countries — which probably reflect the situation in most Arab States — enroll only 8 out of every 1000 illiterates, and that only 5 out of those 8 successfully complete the program.

Moreover, the same study indicates that the total number of illiterates in 5 of the 6 states has increased due to the increase in the population. However, the percentage of illiteracy has decreased by a percentage of 0.5 to 7, with a median of 2.4 percent. The percentage for men is higher than among women.

The study concludes:

> "If the present rate of decrease in illiteracy did not improve, illiteracy would not be eradicated in less than 42 years, assuming that the number of illiterates remains the same. Such an assumption is continuously eroded by

the increase in population, the lack of sufficient places in the primary schools for all children of school age, drop-out rate in the primary school, the lapsing into illiteracy. If the Arab States intend to eradicate illiteracy within 15 years, which is the target set by the Alexandria Conference, we then have to maintain an annual literacy rate of 6.7 percent as a minimum. In other words, we have over the past 5 years achieved no more than 12 percent while we should have achieved at least 33 percent. We are, therefore, moving at only one third of the speed required to achieve the target."

The picture portrayed by this study (although not unrealistic), the first attempt of its kind, does not leave much room for optimism.

5. THE ARAB EFFORTS

The Arab Nation has realized through its long struggle against imperialism, the close link between freedom and knowledge. For that reason the literacy movement has, for over half a century now, been tied to that political struggle. The literacy movement has taken different forms in spreading knowledge among the masses at a time when the colonial power was actively concerned with limiting educational opportunities by destroying the existing traditional institutions and substituting those with an extremely limited number of forms of political or social education, and then by directing such modern education to serve its imperialist aims.

Following political independence; literacy work expanded in the Arab States. Special administrative units and central organizations were set up in all Arab States. Some of the States witnessed significant voluntary contributions by non-governmental organizations to literacy work at all levels from planning to implementation. The majority of the Arab States have adopted legislation that organizes literacy work as a state responsibility. In addition to that, Arab States have now accepted the principle of planning for adult education and literacy in an attempt to link the work to development plans, and also to give programs specific time targets.

Some progress has been made also on the technical side of the work. Training has received careful attention. Training programs cater to all workers in adult education whether these workers are technicians, administrators or organizers. In addition to that, much effort is made in curriculum development, book preparation, educational aids, educational technology and operational research.

On the Pan-Arab level, Arab and international organizations undertake some responsibility in the field of staff training and coordination. ASFEC (Regional Center for Functional Literacy in Rural Areas for the Arab States), which was established by UNESCO and the Egyptian government in 1952 as a "basic education center" for the training of adult education and literacy workers is the first Pan-Arab effort in this respect. ASFEC has made a significant pioneering con-

tribution which has included training of leaders, research, methodology and teaching materials; at the same time it has helped spread general awareness of the problem.

ARLO (Arab Literacy Organization) was on the other hand the first Pan-Arab organization, established by the Arab League in 1966 as a "regional organization for the eradication of illiteracy". Despite its short history, ARLO has succeeded in organizing a vast program of work which included all the Arab States in the field program through some pioneering experiments and some pilot projects. ARLO was successful in organizing meetings and discussions which generated confidence between ARLO and member-states and the technical agencies in those states. The result of that confidence is the availability of basic data in all Arab States; the exchange of experience, and the coordination of programs. In addition to that, ARLO has succeeded in cooperating with regional and international adult education organizations. ARLO is continuously developing its capacity within the framework of ALECSO (Arab Leaque Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization) to play a more effective role.

To conclude this survey, it may be beneficial to summarize the progress made by Arab States in the realm of literacy and adult education. The movement started in the Arab States as part of the struggle against imperialism. It aimed at reaching the broad masses who shared a common desire for freedom. It can therefore be said that the movement started as a comprehensive one, addressing itself to all citizens. This is a sound beginning consistent with the philosophy of educational rights. The method adopted is known as the traditional method because it looked at literacy primarily within an educational framework, conceiving the teaching of reading and writing as a general objective . . .

For both literacy and adult education there has been much pioneering concerning concepts and philosophies. Examples are: "basic education", "education for community development", "functional adult education", "continuing education".

It is necessary to add that all these concepts were developed within UNESCO in cooperation with the governments, the organizations and the agencies concerned, on both the regional and the international levels. It is not easy to judge whether the shift from one concept to another and from one approach to another is based on accurate scientific evaluation through a comprehensive field study, or whether it was the result of a discovery of new patterns of relationship linked to a specific problem, or an attempt to benefit from the methods of social work, or an adjustment to the rapidly increasing cultural changes, or a wish to confront in an effective and practical manner a social evil (illiteracy) which grows like cancer in a direction opposite to the scientific and technological revolution which benefits man.

However, all these concepts and approaches which are still practiced simultaneously and consecutively in different societies represent, in their totality, the development of literacy and its methodology. On the one hand they show the dynamism of literacy and the great attention given to it by the world community and by national governments; on the other it is one of the fundamental contemporary issues which affect international peace and prosperity.

It was quite natural for the literacy movement in the Arab States to be influenced by all these concepts and practices, although it may not be easy to evaluate their impact on the Arab situation. However, it is easy to see the signs of disillusionment when a certain path which has hardly been started is abandoned for another path. The Arab States have been subject to pressure dictated by social and political conditions, and from international cooperation and the benefits from international achievements. It is clear that our dependence on all these has diverted us, to some extent, from a Pan-Arab effort to search for a methodology which suits our cultural heritage with all its educational richness, which fits the reality of our situation with all its vast resources, and which suits our ambitions.

A short comment on these concepts is now required. The traditional comprehensive approach which aims at educating all illiterates, irrespective of their background and experience, without any order of priority, results in quantitative shortcomings with respect to preparing a citizen because it is satisfied with teaching him the skills of how to read and write without any commitment to a specific social or vocational content. This approach considers the equivalent of 4 years of primary education a reasonable level at which an adult could be considered literate. The choice is directly influenced by the fact that the primary school in the Arab States had for a long time lasted for four years. Literacy in this context is seen as substitute for the mission of the primary school despite the difference between children and adults, and despite what the school stands for, as an institution, in terms of more limited social growth. In contrast, literacy classes do represent an independent function which can and should lead to new social and political opportunity which changes the social status of the illiterate.

As stated earlier, some new experiences based on relating the phenomenon of illiteracy to the social reality, have been acquired internationally. One of these is the idea of basic education which aims at the village community, using reading and writing as both a means and an end for creating an awareness of the problems of development and for throwing light on its relationship with all socio-economic aspects and for spreading the idea of self-reliance. Basic education was, in that respect, a pioneering step in defining the educational context for literacy activities, and for relating education to issues which faced the community, and for using it as a vehicle for promoting awareness of local problems and felt needs.

The concept of basic education developed, as early as the 1950s, into the

concept of developing the local community. This can only happen by the re-organization of the local communities, the creation of needs which social change brings about, and not only by the concern with felt needs and the promotion of consciousness of those needs. Social activity in this context should be linked with productivity in an all-embracing local development movement, which draws on both governmental and non-governmental sources. Literacy was thus linked to an activity which used education for development of the community. However, the priorities which adults themselves determined and their direct incentives, upset the balance between the educational activities and the activities of the other local agencies. There was, in addition, a conflict over technical and administrative responsibilities between educational and social agencies. This was a direct cause which led at the end of the 1960s to the transfer of literacy from a traditional to a functional approach.

It must be noted that both basic education and community development were based on a notion described as a quantitative comprehensive, with some attention to the qualitative side. Literacy workers have been disturbed by the fact that the quantitative approach has produced poor results, expecially in the face of population explosion. This is why they resorted to the functional approach, which is based on "selectivity" and "intensiveness". It emphasizes the qualitative value of literacy but it represents a retreat on the quantitative side. Selectivity means the giving of priority to a sector of the society directly involved in the process of socio-economic productivity and adopts an organizational pattern through which the literacy programs operate.

"Intensiveness" comes as complementary to the idea of selectivity. It means linking the literacy process to the kind of work the individual is doing so that the training can take place simultaneously with learning how to read and write. This is done through the use of a vocabulary and concepts related to the vocation of the sector of the community involved.

The UNESCO Evaluation of Experimental World Literacy Projects indicates that the functional approach has its shortcomings. UNESCO has now expanded the concept of functionality to include the entire social structure of society. This will necessarily broaden the concept of selectivity and consequently bring the functional approach closer to the quantitative comprehensive approach.

Functionality is in reality the logical basis for any meaningful human activity. There is no social behaviour without purpose or objective. The application of selectivity however can result either in delaying or denying the educational right of those who work outside the setting of organized groups. Those who suffer under these circumstances are the rural people who in fact deserve special attention because of their contribution to the economy and also because of their numbers.

When the present writer was drafting the Functional Literacy Act for The Democratic Republic of Sudan in 1971, he considered the village as the organizational unit for the villagers. In that way the Act has given the organizational concept a more comprehensive interpretation in an attempt to arrive at justice and equality among citizens.

One could say that the concentration on vocation and the economically productive sector of the population does away with an important function of adult education, that is helping adults to be aware of national, regional and international issues, and helping them to participate fully in activities that influence their lives. This is a basic national and international objective of education which leads to planting the idea of international peace in the hearts and minds of people through education. Besides, it is the right of people to decide on events that directly affect them.

It can be concluded that the field of literacy is confused with varying approaches and methodologies, all of which are used in the Arab States either simultaneously or consecutively. The problem of illiteracy gets increasingly complicated.

The concept of life-long learning is becoming increasingly accepted in educational circles. It does not stop at literacy alone but goes beyond it to deal with the problems of human knowledge that have been created by the scientific and technological revolutions which led to a rapidly changing rhythm in human civilization. It also led to a cultural explosion as a result of the multiplicity and effectiveness of the knowledge delivery systems in a world full of new phenomena in the patterns of relationships between human and natural resources.

However, the concept of life-long learning is yet to be put into practice. To achieve that it must have its institutions, methodology and techniques.

6. LITERACY STRATEGIES

Advanced societies that have managed to rid themselves of illiteracy differ historically from the developing societies. They developed gradually until they reached a stage of a somewhat balanced growth. This does not mean that those societies never experienced some difficult phases of cultural lag resulting from the fact that the material elements in society change faster than the values and behaviour related to them. There are some societies which made a big leap forward within a very short span of time but they did so at a high social cost.

The advanced societies have freed themselves of illiteracy as a de facto situation since advancement implies education, knowledge, and "up-to-dateness". The question is how was that achieved?

If education means to some extent human advancement, then education in the advanced societies was achieved in the same way in which human advancement was achieved. In societies that developed historically literacy was eradicated

in successive phases as was the case in Europe and the United States of America, where a comprehensive graduated approach was adopted. A system of compulsory education was operated over a long period of time with a suitable content that responded to the development requirements in each society. Cultural change was matched by a kind of self-adjustment through modern aids and functional institutions in society to counteract all symptoms of backwardness that persisted in certain aspects of society. Education became an integral part of the day-to-day behaviour of the individual and an element of good upbringing. The school as a social institution was seen as an extension of the home. In the same way the factory, the farm, the shop and the office were seen as an extension of the school. Thus the physical integration is close, and the functional cycle is complete between the various activities in societies that are advanced socially and politically. In addition to that, in the advanced societies we come across various institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, which are actively engaged in adult education in different specializations and at different levels, including the university level. Such institutions are fully recognized by society. All this is part of the cultural, technical and scientific services which society provides through its different agencies which also include the theatre, libraries, museums and information networks, etc. Such a strategy can be called the "strategy of strength".

Unlike this strategy which has been achieved historically and gradually, there are societies which did not follow the gradual scientific and technological advancement, but were prepared for the leap forward by social and political ideologies that enable them to skip certain stages. These are mainly the socialist societies, such as the U.S.S.R., China and Cuba which adopted the principle of the comprehensive qualitative and quantitative approach. Such a strategy is based on the absorption of all children of school age into the compulsory school system, the eradication of illiteracy among the adult population through mass literacy campaigns which organically link reading and writing to political and economic objectives. All the resources in the community are mobilized and all available educational methods are utilized. However, the details of such a strategy vary from one country to the other according to the local circumstances. The countries which apply this strategy extend opportunities for out-of-school education, they introduce new innovations in the field of training and the general culture for specialized groups through the setting-up of specialized agencies. They organize night school programs, part-time study and educational leaves, sometimes with full pay. Moreover, great attention is paid to cultural and technical activities. This strategy can be called the "forward leap strategy".

Although the two strategies (forward leap strategy and strength strategy) agree on the questions of approach in terms of quality and quantity, they differ in the way they proceed (gradual development vs. the leap). The strategy of

strength depends basically on official organization technically and administratively, while "the leap" strategy depends, in addition to that, on the mobilization of popular non-governmental resources.

The developing countries, for various social reasons, must use a variety of strategies, some of which depend on the traditional approach in terms of quality and the comprehensive approach in terms of quantity. Others use the functional approach, which is gradual in application and procedure and official in organization. However, some national campaigns are organized here and there for a special sector of the population and on seasonal basis. It is worth noting that non-governmental effort has now joined hands with governmental programs, taking the form of political, social and professional organizations in addition to the voluntary individual contributions.

Some developing countries are recruiting non-traditional forces in their fight against illiteracy. Such forces include students who accept their participation in literacy campaigns as a legitimate aspect of their national service responsibility. Although this phenomenon is not a common one, it represents a valuable contribution. The most important thing, however, is the total approach to the problem, its conceptualization, the clarity of vision, and the sustaining of that vision until the objective is achieved. Despite all this, illiteracy is still a visible problem, with all its serious dimensions and its consequences. The total number of illiterates, the majority of whom live in Asia, Africa and Latin America, is about 800 million and is increasing. And this has been happening at a time when the percentage of illiterates in the whole world is decreasing. It came down from 44.3 percent in 1950 to 34 percent in 1970. However, the total number of illiterates increased during this same period from 700 million to 783 million. The percentage in 1980 will be 29 percent while the total number will jump to 820 million.

It is quite clear, therefore, that the problem is too big for the developing countries to handle on their own. For the Arab States this is specially true. They swing from one strategy to the other. They take from the "strength strategy" the idea of organizing literacy classes, while they borrow from the "leap strategy" the phenomenon of seasonal and local literacy campaigns which hardly lead to any tangible results. This is the general situation in the Arab States. There are some exceptions but these are still in the experimental stage.

7. TOWARDS AN ARAB STRATEGY

A well documented socio-economic study which deals with the fabric of the whole Arab society is a basic necessity to which must be added some serious consideration of the educational problems and phenomena within that society. This is important because the problem of illiteracy is not a simple educational process as we have seen. The illiterates are not simply those who missed the

opportunity of learning when they were young. They are also the workers and cultivators, an integral part of the social and economic fabric of society in which they live and work; they are consumers and many enjoy certain social positions without being adversely affected by the fact that they are illiterates. It is clear that this kind of situation must be changed in such a way that an illiterate will find a need or a goal in becoming literate. There will not be any motivation to eradicate illiteracy so long as the whole climate of society condones the condition.

The following example shows the relationship between the illiteracy of the individual and that of society. It clearly shows that illiteracy cannot be effectively dealt with unless both the individual and the society are freed from it at the same time. The example is that of the Bedouin, the cattle owner, and the rancher. For the Bedouin, raising cattle is the backbone of rural life, it is the normal pattern of life around which all values, attitudes and relationships are built. These include the concept of time and its use, attitude to work, wealth and its distribution, ownership, leadership, social role and social status, kinship, etc., etc. A close look at the economic activities of this Bedouin will immediately show that the production cycle depends basically on nature. All his other activities beyond that are related to traditional knowledge about rain, grazing areas, knowledge of elementary veterinary medicine, some traditional Bedouin skills, the protection of his cattle against raids by men or animals. To him the social value of cattle is considered to be higher than the economic value, and their number is more important than their breed or quality. Within this context there is no difference for the Bedouin between the literate and the illiterate because knowing how to read and write does not influence the process of production or consumption or social values at any stage. Moreover, the Bedouins, especially those in the Western Desert, are content with hiring a religious man who lives among them and observes all the religious rites and educates those who are willing among their children. He answers all their religious questions and presides over their marriage ceremonies, etc., etc.

In contrast to this is the rancher who acts like a businessman and who does not only need to be able to read in every step he takes, but he also needs advanced technical knowledge. To him, animals do not feed and grow at the mercy of nature but they have to be planned for carefully, beginning with the breeding of the animal, feeding it, marketing it and keeping careful accounts of all stages. The rancher takes interest in the market situation both nationally and internationally, he knows about taxes, industrialization, stocks and shares, insurance and loans, etc. and he also knows how to benefit from such facilities. Activities of this kind and scale can only be handled by a literate person.

The same sort of problems raised by this example are encountered in all sectors of a subsistence economy. A good example is the village farmer who

follows traditional methods of farming that he inherited from his ancestors. My personal experience during my work in the villages with farmers in trying to assess their attitude to modern technology suggests that the farmer looks upon the agricultural expert who represents the new agricultural technology as a stranger. Nevertheless, the farmer accepts everything the expert says out of politeness. But as soon as the agricultural experts leaves, the farmer goes back to the old practices because he believes that he knows much better than the expert.

The reality of the situation is that traditional farming techniques are still predominant, they have not been affected by mechanization and new technology. What the agricultural scientists and experts tell the village farmers is no more than theoretical oral instructions that are not perceived to relate to the day-to-day reality. The village farmer in the traditional environment does not need reading and writing. In fact, reading and writing may look to him like a waste of time.

It is therefore obvious that strong motivation is a prerequisite for a successful literacy project. In the case of the farmer, the whole agricultural sector has to be modernized so that the farmers see the need for training and for learning new techniques.

In conclusion it must be said that the eradication of illiteracy throughout the whole society must go hand in hand with the eradication of illiteracy within the individual. If the individual needs reading and writing, then the society must provide the right environment for that individual so that he can function economically and socially and play his part in modernizing his society.

How can this strategy for eradicating illiteracy of the individual and of the society be applied in the Arab States?

There are some prerequisites which have to be met:

— defining the problem as accurately as possible in statistical terms. The illiterates have to be classified by age and occupation;
— completing a comprehensive study of the society to include population, economic and socio-political institutions, cultural activities, and the major problems that society encounters;
— on the basis of the findings of the study a plan for a comprehensive educational campaign should be drawn up. Such a plan must include provision for specialized agencies that would respond to the needs of society. Special attention should be paid to women and youth. The voluntary contribution to the campaign, especially the financing of it, is absolutely vital. Education should take place in every possible place or institution including factories, farms, mosques, and public parks and clubs; even in private homes;
— literacy must be seen as an integral part of this comprehensive educational drive. Literacy should go beyond the transitional target of fourth-year primary

level. It must include some follow-up training programs. The new literate must see the benefit of literacy in the form of some social or economic rewards, or access to advanced levels of learning;

— blocking the sources of new illiteracy by providing compulsory primary education for every child in school age;

— special non-formal education be provided for youth to enable them to join the formal system within a shorter period of time as compared to the time spent in the formal compulsory primary school;

— making it compulsory for all organized groups of workers such as government employees, the army and the police, to become literate. This would require the provision of incentives and penalties which may include — at a later stage — a condition that would make illiterates ineligible for employment by the government;

— approaching the problem in the villages and local communities on the basis of the comprehensive method through the mobilization of all resources in the community (both government and voluntary);

— the setting up of a local organization which should include all the social organizations, including government agencies; (This will help in the process of coordination, administration and technical supervision. The national organization or system must have some specialized units.).

The educational program in society should be seen as an ongoing activity that helps to renew the whole society, an effort to which the new literates can contribute significantly.

Within the context of such a comprehensive approach to community learning, many of the traditional and contemporary problems should disappear. Among these problems the two most significant are the question of incentives and the mental blocks that illiterates encounter and which are direct causes of dropping out and wastage. Such obstacles have hampered literacy work in the Arab Region as well as in other parts of the world. Other technical problems such as the shortage of teachers, equipment, accommodation, etc., should be solved by the communal effort which views literacy as part of an integral whole.

The concept and program which we have outlined does not provide all the answers to all questions. However, it gives the general picture. Its success will depend on the general plan, the administrative organization, the ability of local leadership, a balanced approach to social change and development which will entail some new concepts which may frighten the traditionalists. It is, therefore, imperative that changes will be introduced in a way that takes into con-

sideration the values and the experience of society. There should be no violent confrontation with these values; persuasion and guidance should be the basis on which one should operate.

The process of comprehensive learning must provide room for new innovations. It must also make use of existing traditional institutions in society. The mosque, for example, can play a very effective cultural role; it can provide both adults and children with an opportunity to study the Koran and also learn a great deal about religion. Other institutions such as community centres, health centres and hospitals can play an equally effective role in the welfare of the family, especially in the rural areas.

It is useful to mention here that there are in the Arab States two experimental programs which have adopted such a comprehensive approach. The first one is in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Emirates. The plan integrates literacy with general education in a situation where there is almost compulsory universal primary education. The experiment has now reached a stage where schools (at all levels) cannot accommodate the numbers of adults who come to classes in the evening. Some of these adults started at the literacy level. Others started at university level. In this respect it is evident that the adult education movement here is strong compared to other Arab States. Moreover, participants in adult classes receive social and material incentives. The movement has created a strong social momentum which has influenced the education of women in a very positive way. Women are coming to literacy classes in great numbers; many of them take courses beyond the literacy level.

The other experiment is in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. It is based on the comprehensive approach to the problem of adult illiteracy in a national intensive literacy campaign which is preceded by compulsory universal primary education. This experiment started in 1975.

8. ADULT EDUCATION

The concept of adult education includes, among other things, literacy. Adult education is an organized form of learning with specific objectives and programs. It takes place outside the formal school program. It is important to emphasize the non-formal character of adult education since many adults go to formal learning institutions such as higher institutes and universities. What they learn in these institutions is not technically classified as adult education.

Adult education as we know it today came about as a response to the socio-economic and technological needs in society. It started in Europe and America in the 19th century and expanded in the 20th century.

In fact, the roots of this modern movement can be traced to the Danish folk high schools, the mechanic institutes of England and correspondence education

in the United States. In Britain the term adult education was confined to liberal education and the definition excluded technical and vocational training. The universities and other approved bodies were given the responsibility for adult education.

In 1949, UNESCO organized the first World Adult Education Conference at Elsinore in Denmark at which many countries were represented. Although Elsinore is significant as a turning point in the history of adult education, it fell short of defining adult education and its functions.

The Montreal Conference in 1960 was an important landmark in the history of adult education. It came eleven years after Elsinore. Those years witnessed significant developments for adult education. It acquired wider recognition, the concepts were broadened and adult education was no longer considered synonymous with literacy or vocational training or liberal studies. It came to be recognized as an educational program embracing all studies for adults and for coordination and coherence in response to contemporary needs.

Progress in this direction continued to be made, evidenced by the Tokyo Conference of 1972 which UNESCO organized and which was the largest international educational gathering of its kind. The Tokyo Conference came at a time when the world was looking for new educational concepts in the light of the new cultural variables within the framework of the social, scientific and technological revolutions. Hence the idea of life-long learning which UNESCO presented was accepted as a basic concept.

The Tokyo Conference concluded that adult education is an integral part of the educational system and that education must be life-long.

It is clear to the present writer that the law of evolution will determine a unification of all facets of education in one coherent system in the same way as education has succeeded in incorporating into its orbit a number of activities that remained for a long time outside that orbit. This is an important principle to remember in working out a future strategy for adult education which will become one of the facets of general education. Adult and general education can be brought closer to one another by expanding the boundaries of general education on one hand and by organizing and legalizing the activities of adult education on the other.

While it is generally accepted that adult education is an activity that has become necessary because of change and development, it must be remembered that the Muslim/Arab culture has firmly and clearly laid the foundations for adult education in such a way that education, long before it became a right of the individual in modern times, was incumbent on every Muslim (male and female alike). Education was equated with human freedom as prisoners of war were set free by the Prophet as soon as they taught illiterate Muslims reading and writing.

Islam put no time limit on education, instead, it made it a continuing process from the cradle to the grave. It encouraged Muslims to seek knowledge wherever they could find it. It was aware of the changes that were likely to occur from one generation to the other and for that reason Muslims were reminded not to impose their own values on their children because their children were destined to live in a different era.

In the cultural heritage of Islam, there are some adult educational practices which exemplified these principles. Adult education was practiced in the school, the mosque, the market place and in private homes. We also have the system of studentship and academic awards which were given by the Savant in his personal capacity and not by the institution. Such awards were of high scientific value and they were accepted throughout the Arabic and Islamic world. I mention this to put on record that our culture has known adult education over fourteen centuries, and also to emphasize the need for us to look at the possibility of making use of our cultural heritage in the search for appropriate models to be applied in the present.

While adult education, as practiced today in developed societies, leads to the promotion of skills as well as to social adjustment, it is certainly an instrument of change in the developing societies. Its role is therefore a basic one especially if we look at it within the context of general education which up to the present, has only absorbed a small percentage of the total population.

Adult education should, on one hand, complement general education programs and on the other it should be an instrument of promotion of skills and experiences.

The search for a suitable strategy for adult education in the Arab States should start with these basic questions: What is the state of adult education in the Arab States? What are its problems and its requirements?

At present adult education in the Arab States is sometimes regarded as being synonymous with literacy. There is neither a specialized central organization nor any special programs or special institutions, except in limited forms, such as in the case of night schools, and some extra-mural programs organized by some schools and universities.

However, there are several adult education activities of a vocational nature such as the institutions that provide courses in typing, language and secretarial work. There are also some institutions which provide training in some skills such as book-keeping, journalism, etc., by correspondence.

Most of these activities, if not all of them, take a commercial form. The participants come as individuals and there is no effective educational supervision by governments.

Although the status of adult education in the Arab States is unsatisfactory,

one must remember that there are certain problems which led to the present situation. Some of these problems are: that the relationship between general education and adult education is confined to organized formal school education with all its rituals; that any education that does not fall within such a definition was not recognized neither legally nor socially.

Because of the "pricing" of certificates and the attachment of importance to the piece of paper the individual obtains rather than to his experience, this attitude has had direct bearing on people's right to employment on one hand and on the effectiveness of many employees on the other. It is as if the certificates will do the work and not the experienced individual.

The legal status of certificates has clearly affected the social standing of adult education because the social status of the individual in developing countries is judged according to the kind of government job an individual holds, which in turn is related to the formal kind of education he has been through. Consequently, any job or any other experience outside the government employment circles is considered of a lower status.

One of the problems facing adult education in the Arab States is the lack of reliable information on its structure and organization; statistics on adult education are incomplete. UNESCO has completed a successful experiment in this respect in the Libyan Arab Republic in collaboration with the Libyan Ministry of Education. This is a major step which will make possible the organization of adult education in Libya, including its place in society.

Another problem is the inadequacy of research in all aspects of adult education. This is a major problem that should be regarded as a prerequisite for any adult education strategy. Equally important is research connected with development projects to determine the specialized manpower needs of those projects. This kind of research will help adult educators conceive a better strategy for adult education. It is true that some advanced studies in adult education are carried out in some faculties of education in the Arab States, but these are no more than isolated efforts that, though useful, do not fit into a general policy or a co-ordinated plan.

9. ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY

It is clear that adult education in the Arab States occupies a modest place, with undefined boundaries. This is a situation that calls, in the first place, for some special efforts to secure recognition for adult education, and to grant it the necessary institutions. Once this is established, we can then turn to ways of improving and spreading it.

It is important at this stage of development in the Arab States to give priority to the question of defining the concept of adult education. This is a major task

that calls for participation by a number of organizations and institutions which include wide sectors of the population with specialists in the various aspects of development. They should include teachers, economists, sociologists, and lawyers.

Completing such a study would not automatically lead to the institutionalization of adult education in an exemplary manner. But it would make it easier for each state according to its needs and abilities to start its adult education programs on the right path. The programs will then develop within the functional framework of the general development plan.

It is, therefore, necessary to give thought to the nature of relationship between adult education and the formal system of education so that the two will be integrated at various levels in terms of planning and implementation. Both types of education should be treated within the same context as regards resources, objectives and methods of implementation. This could be accomplished either through the merger of the two at a certain stage or through designing a special channel for adult education with its own ladder, its programs and its socially and legally acceptable certificates.

It is also necessary to do a survey of the training institutions such as the national institutes for vocational training, language institutes, workshops and small factories to define a target group for each institution and its level of experience and skill so that special programs could be designed for each institution and consequently all certificates awarded by these institutions will receive a fair assessment on the general labour market.

The implementation of such a proposal requires the provision of special training programs, the setting up of model institutions, and a variety of certification procedures. It also requires legal and administrative procedures which will bring this kind of activity in line with the educational process. This is something that could, and should, be done in order to organize this wide sector of existing activities upon which a great majority of the population depends, and which has so far received no adequate technical support or any enlightened administrative guidance from formal educational institutions.

Another way of giving adult education support and recognition would be to introduce adult education as an integral part of the education program of all educational institutions from the primary school to the university.

In the Republic of the Sudan, for example, all secondary schools, technical secondary and higher technical schools engage in adult education. Some provide tuition in subjects related to school certificate, others provide technical and vocational training for workers who eventually acquire training certificates. Many of the participants come to the classes to increase their technical and vocational abilities. There should also be a system of certification which is legally and socially acceptable.

It is also important that ministries, government departments, farms, factories and public corporations adopt a policy of training and re-training of employees. It would be necessary for these bodies to cooperate with educational institutions which can either grant or authorize the granting of certificates to those who complete the training program. There should be a system which will provide educational opportunities either full-time or part-time for those who are capable and have the interest to study.

An important form of adult education which should be adopted is the free university and the workers university models. They both require a flexible policy over admission and programs, a policy that should take into account the learners' practical experience. Traditional universities should extend their services to the adult communities through evening study programs, an open university system and through organized correspondence programs. In this respect one can visualize the setting up of a Pan Arab Open University which can avail all Arab youth of its services. If such an idea is implemented, it would certainly be a step towards the unification of thought in the Arab World. It would also be a living example of Pan Arab cooperation in developing human resources in the Arab States.

If adult education is to succeed as an instrument of social development and change, we must have a flexible system of formal education capable of integrating adult education. This can only be achieved with a high degree of innovative technical and organizational capabilities. It also requires a high degree of open-mindedness, the willingness to change and a comprehensive outlook towards the socio-economic structure of society. This is a big task which is not the responsibility of the ministries of education and the universities alone, but it relates to the administrative and financial systems of the State. Nevertheless, there must be a revision of curricula. The question of degrees and certificates, and the question of the relationship between work and experience within the context of social justice and equity must also be studied.

It is essential, therefore, to establish a department of adult education in every faculty of education and in every teachers' training college. The main objectives of such departments would be to establish adult education as a discipline, to carry out research into adult education, especially operational research in aspects of educational theory of adult education, the psychology of adult learning, the organization of adult education and the socio-economic and legal factors in the development of adult education. All these aspects should be studied within the context of an integrated approach to the question of education (adult as well as school education) and the social structure in the Arab States. In addition to that, these departments should train adult education specialists for research and advanced training.

An adult education strategy that can contribute to the development of human

resources in the Arab States must be Pan-Arab in outlook; that is to say, it must be based on an assessment of the needs, the potential and the existing human and material resources in the Arab States. Working out separate strategies for separate Arab States is of little value to the Arab Nation. Experience indicates that such isolated strategies face the same fate that volumes of recommendations and reports face — they simply remain on shelves collecting dust. Imbalance between material and human resources in the Arab States is one of the key factors that led to the present state of affairs and it can only be corrected if a Pan-Arab strategy is worked out. What the Arab States need most is the ability to implement the ideas and concepts that have already been agreed upon. It is only sensible to have a Pan-Arab educational strategy for the educational preparation of the Arab individual — the only real and lasting capital for the Arab Nation — and which would enable the Arab Nation to realize its legitimate ambitions and to carry out its mission in this world. It is no secret that material and human resources vary from one Arab country to the other. The only way to put these resources to effective use would be to create a state of equilibrium between the human and the material elements.

This would mean, in practical terms, the setting up of a joint Arab Fund to which the financially able states should contribute generously. Such a Fund would certainly assist the financially less able Arab States to carry out their educational plans. The Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization should be entrusted with the administration of such a Fund.

10. CONCLUSIONS

Adult education is an essential educational means for social adjustment. It is also essential for living in this technological age. It is particularly important for developing communities because apart from the fact that it is an instrument of change, it has the distinct dimension of being an alternative for adults to catch up with their basic rights in education in order that they may participate effectively in public life.

The formal educational institutions, even in the developed societies, are somewhat conservative. They are therefore not fully capable of absorbing the rapid change which results from the explosion of knowledge. They cannot respond to the social needs which multiply in a continuously increasing rhythm as a result of the scientific and technological revolution which now controls human destiny. This situation has called, and will continue to call, for new educational models and formats to fit the new concept of life-long learning.

The developing societies, which include the Arab States, must stand up to the challenge posed by a burdensome legacy of backwardness which is illustrated by illiteracy. At the same time these societies must aim at modernizing themselves

by engaging in a process of development and regeneration of society. All educational plans should be broadened and extended quantitatively and qualitatively on a Pan-Arab scale that would allow the pooling of resources (material and human) in the Arab States to enable those states to fulfil their historical mission.

Adult education in the Arab States stands in need of proper statistics, surveys and special studies which may throw light on its scope and its various institutions. It is a discipline that must be thoroughly researched; specialists have to be trained for it, and its institutions and functions should be integrated with those of the formal system. The entire program should take place within the context of a Pan-Arab Plan for the development of human resources.

CHAPTER THREE

Education and the Role of Women in Integrated Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Development has become, in the political and sociological jargon, both a motto and a legitimate ambition. There is a general agreement that development is the only way to adequately deal with the sociological and technological change. Development is, on the one hand, an intellectual expression regarding the progress of socio-political thought and the rights and duties of the individual, on the other hand it is perceived as a way of enjoying the fruits of science and technology in the realms of production and utilization.

Development has, therefore, become the logical yardstick for measuring both social progress and social backwardness. However, development as a concept has been and still is somewhat ambiguous in its application and in the way it is conceived by people. This is why there are certain situations where development is taken to mean material development only, thus ignoring the basic aspects which relate to human development.

Development is, in the first place, a human process attained by man for man. Such an integrated concept of development leads to the study of some basic sociological factors and human resources in the productive sector of the economy as well as the need for training and utilizing these resources and finally an investigation of the problems associated with growth.

It is beneficial to discuss the role of women in integrated rural development within the context of education, training and employment. Such a discussion is essential for conceptualizing and implementing and evaluating development programs.

2. ON DEVELOPMENT

Development is basically a process of changing direction. It is also a process of

utilizing natural resources and converting them into economic products through science and applied technology. Since development is accomplished by man for man, it is therefore a process of changing the status quo. It is a cultural change, a renewal of the requirements of living, including ethics and human relations, skill development, means of production and methods of utility.

An urgent problem in development is posed by the nature of change and what it implies in terms of demolition as well as reconstruction; both have special prerequisites and are fraught with obstacles. It is not easy to switch from one established pattern without a stage of tension and conflict varying in length and intensity. The stress is sometimes so intense that it impedes change or at least creates a state of superficial acceptance of the status quo, thus blocking any real radical change.

Creating new skills, with all the necessary prerequisites, including modification of ethics and behaviour does not happen overnight because such skills and attitudes require, on top of the usual logistics, special circumstances which lend themselves to interaction, growth and proliferation.

If development is, in the final analysis, a process of identifying all the thinking and achievements of the Age, it is also an acceptance of the pattern of civilization as portrayed by social, scientific and technological revolutions.

There is in this respect a difficult question which the developing countries face. While these nations are keen on retaining their national identities, their cultural heritage and their modes of behaviour, they are equally keen on benefiting from the fruits of present-day civilization. They have accepted the illusion that they can select some of the material components linked to production and organization, such as machinery, factories, communications, systems of management and education, etc., and at the same time retain their traditional values that are deeply rooted in the social structure; on the assumption that this is the happy medium that combines the best of two worlds — the past and the present.

This is more or less a cultural illusion. It is, no doubt, encouraged by present-day civilization because of its commercial returns in the sense that those who have the financial means can buy its components and its external appearance; but they cannot buy its essence and that is the difference between purchasing and experiencing development. Development can only take place if one has the inner ability to make it happen.

We have stressed the comprehensiveness of civilization in the sense that it is so much a coherent whole that it is impossible to separate its material appearance from its social implications, just as it is impossible to separate the object from its shadow. Civilization, more than any other time in the past, has a logical character because it is based on finding of science and mathematics. This means there is some rigidity in the making of it and in its usage. When, for example,

we purchase a textile factory or a cement factory, we import with it new skills, new industrial relations, new concepts of labour, time, and income, new fashions of consumption, new needs for social services, new forms of administration, finance and taxation, etc. The result is social confusion which surrounds both the external appearance and the substance of developing countries. Hence the developing countries, which are dependent on traditional means of production, and consequently characterized by traditional patterns of social relations, will continue to face this difficult decision. Can one possess both the glory of the past and the beauty of the future? The question does not, as stated earlier, depend on financial ability alone. It depends on social ability in the first place. Money is the product of development, and it is not the only means of development. For example, in the oil-producing Arab States there is more money proportionately than there is in the developed countries. But that has not brought about development because the social equivalent (change of attitude and necessary skills) is missing.

This fact indicates the importance of the time factor in the process of development. Preparing the necessary personnel and building the infra-structure must be completed through the course of time as it was the case in the developed countries. This does not rule out the possibility of a leap forward by skipping some phases in development. However, we cannot ignore the importance of the time element in creating the resources and an appropriate climate for real development.

It must be reiterated that development is in essence a humanitarian process; man is both a means and an end; man is also the only guarantor of development. Hence, a comprehensive development which gives the human being his proper place in the process of life renewal reflects the right kind of attitude. A well-planned effort is needed which is apt to face obstacles and negativism. Such resistance should be regarded as an expected aspect of the process.

Women and Development

Paying special attention to the role of women within the framework of integrated development is vital to the process of development itself. Traditionally developing societies have denied women a creative role. Their involvement outside of the home was restricted to a small segment of essential labour. Consequently, women were deprived of the opportunity to participate in a number of the basic activities including the right to be educated, an activity that was somehow considered a male domain. It is true to say that the lack of education among women left them open to superstition and negative values and that has had an adverse effect on their role, not only as participants in development but also as recipients

of development. This situation has had its serious impact on the traditional role of women in the bearing and raising of children.

Development is in some of its aspects a process of striking a balance between population growth on the one hand and economic growth on the other. Economic growth must exceed population growth. It is, however, a common phenomenon in the developing countries to see the increase in population swallow all developmental efforts.

Women, especially rural women, have themselves contributed to this serious problem and that is because the traditional division of labour makes child-bearing to a large extent a full-time job. In developing societies this role is of significant value either because of the tribal belief that attached importance to the numerical value of the family and the tribe for reasons of security, or because of an interest in economic earnings through labour. For example, to have a female child is considered a great asset for the family in many cattle-raising communities in Africa. A good example can be drawn from the Nilotic tribes in Southern Sudan where the dowry paid on the occasion of marriage is usually a vast number of cattle. That becomes automatically a dowry that the brother of the bride gives to his bride and in many cases the marriage of the male members of the family is dependent on that of the female members. This practice is highly organized and leads to a system whereby the dowry of each daughter is tied to a specific brother.

Another form of seeking economic earnings is the exploitation of children in traditional sectors of the economy at an early age without accepting any responsibility for their education, health or social welfare. In addition to that, women, who accept marriage as their full-time occupation, are compelled — as a way of maintaining their status in society — to produce as many children as they possibly can because that exercise will provide some security. Besides, women constitute a large sector of the population that stands idle within the context of modern production. Their role is confined to consuming the efforts made by others and by so doing they have complicated the population problem.

It is clear, therefore, that some women have been forced by historical circumstances to remain economically idle and to constitute a factor of backwardness in many aspects of life. However, the present-day pattern of life has led to some change in the status of women economically, socially, legally and professionally. So much is this true that women have become a positive force in meeting needs of development; they are no longer an element of backwardness.

3. WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Education is the only vehicle that will enable women to fulfil their new role as a factor in development and progress. A women as well as a man can change the

status quo, acquire the necessary knowledge and skill for the new life. The fact that women were, in the developing countries, deprived of modern education, is the fundamental reason for their backwardness. There is a strong link between the denial of education and the value systems that determine a woman's role in society as well as the concept of man about her and indeed her own concept of herself, conditioned through social upbringing and social behaviour. It is therefore essential that women should be aware of their rights even before society can become aware of these rights. Such awareness has started rather late. Consequently, women's education in developing societies differs from men's education in terms of opportunity and content. Historically it started later than men's education and secondly social recognition of the ability of women is still overshadowed by old concepts and myths. This is more obvious in rural settings.

Denial of education delayed women's participation in public social activities and reduced her contribution to public life in quantity and quality. One of the common phenomena in the world is the relationship between the backwardness or progressiveness of society and the status of women in that society. The status of women is a positive indicator of the degree of progressiveness or backwardness. The contrast between the developing and the developed societies is worth noting. The status of women is, however, related to their social competence which is in turn related to education because education is the effective instrument for developing new capabilities and thus preparing women for the new life.

Statistics released by UNESCO in 1972 reveal that the percentage of illiterate women in the Arab States is 85.7, compared to 60.2 in other developing countries. While in the developed societies it is only 4.3. The figure for the whole world is 40.3 percent.

It is therefore obvious that the percentage of illiterate women in the Arab States is the highest in the world. Rural women form the highest percentage of illiterates in the Arab States. While we agree that there are two factors here, the historical and the social, it is true that the social factors represent the main obstacle. For example, while the common rights of women are legally established, such rights are in reality only superficially practiced and usually without conviction. Education and training are so interrelated and integrated that they are often treated as synonymous. However, education generally refers to formal educational processes related to a certain age and certain hierarchical institutions. Training is used to include wider, freer and varied exercises in addition to practical skills. Nevertheless, education must precede training because it is the basis on which training can be built. Both education and training aim at helping the individual develop his capabilities and raise his efficiency.

We must mention in this respect non-formal education, especially adult education, which provides greater opportunities for the training of rural women who

missed opportunities for an early education. This is one of the most appropriate areas of activity for non-governmental organizations, such as those involved with women's organizations and who wish to offer training programs in home economics, health and social services as well as educationaal services.

Training has greater importance within the context of life-long learning from the point of view of updating of knowledge and skills, and benefiting from modern scientific ideas through self-teaching, programmed learning. Women can take advantage of such facilities.

The overall prospect of women's education is an optimistic one[1], especially if we take into consideration the historical and the social obstacles to which reference was made earlier. However, there is an imbalance between rural areas and urban areas, the former provides lesser educational opportunities even for boys. Girls in rural areas live in a rigid social climate and that narrows their chances of education as compared to girls in urban areas.

Early separation between the sexes in primary schools and the fact that separate schools are built for boys and girls have added to the narrowing of educational opportunities for both sexes because of the high cost of providing and maintaining separate schools. Some of the Arab States have now introduced co-education at primary level in an effort to reduce cost and to offer girls a better deal. It is very significant that experiments in co-education were successful in rural communities in Sudan while the idea has met with resistance in the cities, where no co-educational government school has been established yet. The implication is that there is more demand for girls' education in rural areas. Thus, it should be remembered that the chances of higher education for rural women are very slender for social reasons relating to the question of the woman being away from her family at a biologically critical stage of her life and to the need for her to be socially occupied at an early age either through marriage or an intermediate kind of education that would not take her away from her community. The enrolment percentage of girls in school is still poor compared to the percentage of boys. However, this percentage is increasing year by year.

Although the number of girls in schools is increasing year after year due to the expansion of education and to the change in attitude, there is little variety in the kind of programs they follow. The bulk of women's education is made up of general and academic education. Very few women receive professional education, except for some limited areas such as teaching, social and medical services. Industrial and agricultural education for women is almost non-existent in spite of its importance for women's participation in development. This is, no doubt, a phenomenon related to the frequent stage of industrial development. It

[1]See Table 1 produced by UNESCO which shows an increase in the percentage of girls in schools in the Arab States.

TABLE 1

UNESCO Statistics showing the percentage increase among girls enrolled in schools in the Arab States

Grade and School Year	Libya	Kuwait	Lebanon	Palestine	Sudan	Tunisia	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Syria
Primary										
1957-58	18.5	42	43.4	38.3	23.1	32	37.6	24.8	34	29.8
1958-59	16.7	42.7	43.2	39.6	25.2	33.6	30.1	25	34.9	30.1
1959-60	18.1	42.7	44.5	39.1	25.5	32.9	37.2	25.2	35.1	29.4
1960-61	19	42.7	46.5	42.1	27.5	33	38.2	26.9	36.6	28.5
1961-62	19.3	43.5	44.2	42.8	28.9	33	38.3	27.2	36	29
1962-63	20.1	43	42	43.7	29.9	33.2	38.4	28.3	38.7	29.6
1963-64	18.6	42.5	41.7	44.5	30.7	33.7	38.7	28.2	39.3	30.2
1964-65	18.9	42.5	42	45.1	32.5	34.1	39	28.2	—	30.8
Secondary										
1957-58	5.4	22.8	41.1	15.6	17.1	25.9	22.4	21.8	20.5	23.1
1958-59	5.6	27.1	40.8	16.1	17.1	27.5	22.8	21	21.8	23.3
1959-60	5.7	28.6	39.8	21.6	17.2	27.4	23.5	22.1	23.3	23.7
1960-61	6.6	29.6	39.7	34.3	17.5	29.9	24.2	23.5	24.4	21.2
1961-62	7.9	31.4	38.4	27.2	17.2	27.6	25.1	21.6	25.1	21.2
1962-63	7.3	32.7	39.4	27.7	17.6	28.4	26.9	22.9	25.4	21.6
1963-64	9.8	34.8	39.4	31.7	18.3	28.4	27.1	23.9	25.7	21.9
1964-65	9.1	35.2	39.5	33.6	17	28.4	28.5	23.8	—	22.1

is, however, imperative for society to plan ahead of time for changes, especially in development strategy.

4. WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

Employment of women within the framework of development must be seen within the context of change in the nature of employment resulting from the industrial civilization. The division of labour between men and women is in part based on the type of work and on relative concepts and values in the traditional society, as part of social upbringing. Division of labour in modern societies is based on the market value of work itself and that is because industrial thinking assumes an integrated society based on production and consumption, a society in which spheres of work are determined by the technical ability to work and not by sex or the type of work. The question is not, who should do this job — the man or the woman? The question is, how do we do this job? The determining factor is the technical ability irrespective of sex. Hence, employment which is linked to development relates to new sectors in society and new activities that require special skills. The basic question therefore goes back to the preparation for the new type of work.

In fact, one can determine the level of development as well as employment opportunities by examining educational statistics from a cultural perspective in the sense that if 60 percent of the population of a certain country are educated, we can safely say that 60 percent of the socio-economic structure in that country falls within the modern sector (i.e., development sector); and that 40 percent falls within the traditional structure. The assumption here is that education is an indicator of development. However, it must be admitted that not every educational opportunity is matched by an employment opportunity. It is also true that some jobs remain vacant because of the lack of qualified persons to fill them. This is a phenomenon related to the question of national planning on one hand and educational planning on the other. The fundamental point, however, is that education is one of the basic sources of modern employment.

In this connection we can see that illiteracy among women in the Arab States is 85.7 percent and that means 85.7 percent of women's employment falls within the traditional sector with the rural areas claiming the biggest share of that percentage.

It is true that rural women who are deprived of education and training do work but the kind of work they do is traditional, e.g. traditional agriculture, cottage industry or petty trading, while their main activity is confined to domestic work, child-bearing and child-raising. In this way women neither contribute to nor benefit from the process of development in a way compatible with their capacity or their numbers in society. On the contrary, they constitute an obstacle

to development because they are swelling the ranks of the traditional sector.

While it is true that men and women have the same right to modern employment, there are historical and sociological factors that lessen the chances of women. This would mean:

a. that education and training as a vehicle for modern employment are more important for women because of the many traditional and sociological problems that surround them;
b. that modern employment opportunities are linked to national development plans and the way they are implemented. Every successful development project provides new employment opportunities;

Statistical studies carried out by the Central Organization for Public Mobilization and Statistics[2] reveal the change that took place in the structure of employment of Egyptian women as illustrated in Table 2. These observations can be made:

— Women are employed in professions that require some scientific and technical skills with a higher pay.
— There is a decrease in the number of women in the public services sector and in the agricultural sector.
— Women employed in teaching and nursing constitute 73 percent of those employed in scientific and technical professions.
— 45 percent are employed in sewing, textile, weaving and knitting industry.
— 89 percent of those engaged in public services sector are employed to do domestic work.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Integrated development which takes into consideration the natural environment and the social milieu is basically a process which is linked to the change in attitude and skills. It aims at transforming traditional societies into modern ones.

The many complex procedures of development entail a series of prerequisites and face many obstacles. One of the most important prerequisites is modern education in its different forms. Of the many obstacles one can point to is the question of imbalance between development operations and population growth. The most significant example is the role of women in traditional societies. For sociological and historical reasons, they have lagged behind men in education. This has reduced their participation in the development process. In fact, they have become an obstacle to development because of their traditional role in production and their limited participation in the modern employment sector. Women have helped in spreading some of the phenomena that impede development. One

[2]The Bulletin of the Central Organization for Public Mobilization and Statistics on the Arab Woman in 20 Years, 1952-1972 (Cairo, January 1974).

TABLE 2

A schedule showing the distribution of women (numerical and percentage wise) between 12 and 65 years old in the production sector by profession (1961-71)

Profession	1961 Total Number	1961 Percentage	1971 Total Number	1971 Percentage	Observation
Scientific and technical professions	35,000	8.3	110,500	19.3	
Manageresses in managerial and executive posts	3,900	0.9	8,200	0.4	
Clerical jobs	10,300	2.5	61,100	10.7	
Salesmanshp	36,500	7.7	42,200	7.4	
General Services Sector	115,600	27.6	98,000	17.6	Nos. decreased
Farming and animal husbandry	180,100	43	143,700	25.6	Nos. decreased
Production labourers	27,800	6.7	55,200	9.6	
Unclassified	9,400	7.3	57,600	9.4	
	418,600	100	572,500	100	

such phenomenon is the population problem to which women add in two respects: first, because they are producing children and secondly, because women do not make an adequate contribution to development projects, mainly because they lack modern production techniques which can be acquired through education and training.

Despite all this, there is a steady rise in the education of women, even though it is behind men's education in both variety and content. One of the key factors in impeding women's education is the policy of separate education for each sex earlier in the primary stages. This policy is in fact a reflection of the reactionary social attitude towards women, an attitude that must change so that women can participate effectively. To enable women to play an effective role in development, special attention must be paid to the education of rural women. They must be given a better opportunity in terms of quality and quantity of education. Attention should also be given to legislation that governs employment of women. In many of the developing countries, for example, women don't share the same terms of service with men. Some of them don't receive any pension. This policy is based on the traditional view that a woman will always have a husband, a brother or a father to look after her. The time is long overdue for women to be seen as complete social beings. They must be given their full rights, especially when it is seen that work in modern society is actually based on rational criteria linked to the nature of the job and not to the nature or sex of the person performing it.

To compensate women for what they have been denied all these years, special attention should be given to adult education, vocational training, and the eradication of illiteracy, especially among rural women to equip them for the new jobs and also to confirm their vital role in the process of development.

Epilogue

These studies have discussed a number of issues that are of great importance not only to the Arab Nations but to the rest of the world, especially the Third World countries. I have repeatedly emphasized the need for these issues to be tackled collectively by the world community. Co-ordination and co-operation are much more urgently needed today than ever before. One of the most encouraging events was the International Conference on Adult Education and Development, which the International Council for Adult Education organized in Tanzania in the summer of 1976.

This conference was convened at a time when the international community was moving towards the second half of the second development decade. Its focus was to emphasize and determine the course of adult education for the achievement of this overall development. We should consider that adult education is in itself a form of the essential development which aims at orienting, training and guiding human potentialities through enabling adults to exercise the rights of citizenship — rights which must be inviolate for a state or a citizen as time passes. Through its implementation on all the political, technical and administrative planes throughout all stages of planning and execution, adult education is in a sense an objective of overall development while at the same time a fundamental means for its achievement. Contemporary scientific and technological civilization is unprecedented in human history. The world has grown so small that it has become a village whose inhabitants live within sight and hearing of one another and share the same fate. However, it still has its rich and its poor quarters.

Hence poverty in this contemporary world lies cheek by jowl with riches. Peace is as close as war. Neither can the rich nor the poor single-handedly solve their problems or take decisions. Neither can the privileged nor the under-

privileged by themselves create certain conditions freely. The realisation of this fact within the context of civilization in this age of the United Nations is a matter of extreme importance.

The major issues that challenge the world and threaten its moral and material existence are reflected in social and economic underdevelopment in different forms such as: population explosion, illiteracy, famine, the exhaustion and misuse of natural resources, environmental pollution, the problems of energy and raw materials, the price spiral of exported commodities, and hostile behaviour including racial prejudice which represents the residue of intellectual barbarity. These are the endless issues which our contemporary world is facing. Such problems can be solved only through genuine and faithful cooperation and through integration. No solutions for a problem are possible in isolation. If this age is one of collective problems, it is also one of collective solutions.

The major problem with which the human community has to cope in this age is that of underdevelopment and the widening gap between developed and developing communities which makes the developed communities more developed and the underdeveloped more so. This problem can be solved only by a coordinated common effort of both developed and underdeveloped communities. Recent indications induce optimism despite the difficulties. The resolutions of the fourth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 1976 held in Nairobi provide for the setting up of a common fund between rich and poor states to overcome the rise of commodity prices. This is a major step on the road of cooperation. The effort made by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and regional organizations will help greatly in creating the social, intellectual and material atmosphere conducive to fruitful world cooperation.

Alongside this international cooperation, efforts must be exerted in many other spheres so that this cooperation can produce dividends. And most important, we must remember that social change can only be effected through man. It is man who changes in turn the natural and social environment with all its potentialities, means, relationships and values.

The essence of the problem of underdevelopment arose as a result of an absence of the forces of progress in the community. Thus woman, who represents half the community, is conspicuous for her non-participation in development processes. The illiterates who form 50 percent of potential manpower are non-participants in the areas of economic and social production.

It is adult education which can bring together all these forces in the battle for progress. Therefore adult education is an essential and irreplaceable step in developing communities to bring about the needed change and development.

It should be mentioned that many major achievements have been recorded in the area of adult education in the first development decade. But it also must be stated that there is still much that has not yet been achieved.

The Arab World is part of the developing communities in its economic and social structure in general as well as in its cultural characteristics, and human and material resources. Yet all of these are positive factors for future social and economic progress.

The major problem in the Arab Nation, as in all developing communities, is that of illiteracy. The effort exerted in containing and liquidating illiteracy is indeed considerable both within the separate states and throughout the Arab area as a whole. The literacy strategy is based on two factors. First, the sources of illiteracy must be blocked through the broadening of the primary education base to absorb all children of both sexes while at the same time giving special importance to the sectors still deprived of education privileges, such as women and the population of remote areas and Bedouin communities in particular.

The second sphere of action is the organization of literacy activity among backward sectors in the centers of production and services, in villages and towns, linking the concept of teaching reading and writing with other social and economic concepts in order to develop citizens capable of contributing to public life on the one hand and contributing to productive operations and services on the other hand. Concepts governing all this have been put into operation. Technical and administrative leaders and staff have been trained for this purpose. Educational means are receiving increased attention. Plans and innovations are being adopted with the purpose of familiarizing the broad masses with the modern technology which confronts them.

Cases in point are the experiments undertaken by ALECSO in three areas of the Arab homeland. In Democratic Yemen, it deals with an agricultural community whose literacy is being carried out side by side and simultaneously with the organization and development of the community in all other sectors.

Another experiment is coping with a labour community in the Arab Republic of Syria. A third one is concerned with a Bedouin community in the United Arab Emirates. It is carried out in the very home of Bedouins and seeks the development of their community while at the same time illiteracy among them is being stamped out.

In the area of adult education, ALECSO has prepared integrated studies about the orientation of adult education within the Arab homeland and has set out its techniques, functions and spheres. In addition, surveys are being conducted constantly on adult education institutions and the scientific research that deals with adult education issues is being translated.

It should be added that ALECSO is undertaking these efforts in conjunction and in coordination with international organizations and with UNESCO in particular. Effective cooperation is being demonstrated at Sirs El-Layyan with ARLO at all levels, in addition to the close cooperation between UNESCO and ALECSO in all the other spheres.

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